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PRESS RELEASE

1500 TONS OF PLASTIC WASTE RECYCLED AND EXPORTED

USAID's Plastic Recycling Project is catalyzing the plastic recycling industry in Macedonia. This month alone the project provided \$25,000 to Macedonian recycling companies to help them invest in new equipment and tools for processing used plastic bottles. The eight grant recipients are: Eco Eras- Veles, Provavil- Skopje, Soncev Rid- Slegovo, Eko Flor - Bogovinje, Muamed AG-Gostivar, JP Cistota i zelenilo and Baskom IND- Kumanovo, ERH Plastik- Skopje and JKP Proleter- Resen. They were selected based on the amount of plastic bottles collected, their organizational capacity, and proposed investments.

"The aim of this financial support is to strengthen the current plastic collection activities and expand the program throughout Macedonia which will lead to further development of an economically viable plastic recycling program" - says Mr. Ljupco Avramovski, the Chief of Party of the Plastic Recycling Project. "Business development program will provide grounds for sustainability of the plastic recycling in Macedonia", explains Mr. Avramovski.

Macedonia, through USAID assistance has shown significant progress in plastic recycling compared with last year. The quantity of plastic collected and recycled has grown close to 1500 tons per year, generating over \$600,000 in exports and increase of 50% compared to last year. It is anticipated that collections will increase significantly when municipalities take a more active role in organizing a primary selection garbage program. Currently, the Plastic Recycling Project team is working with four selected pilot municipalities - Strumica, Kocani, Gostivar and Karpos - to implement a Municipal Plastic Recycling Program. The Plastic Recycling Project including the previous three phases, has invested more than \$ 150 000 since 2003 and intends to invest \$ 1 Million during the next two years.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. Over 25 projects worth more than \$25 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>